

Happy Valley Police Service Levy Failure- Know the Facts

The failure of the Happy Valley Police Service Levy, Measure 3- 462 in the recent November election has prompted discussion amongst Happy Valley Residents, City Council and City staff. We have compiled a list of common questions and concerns that we hope will clarify the importance of the levy and help to drive meaningful and factual conversation to best educate voters for the May 2015 election.

When the City of Happy Valley was formed in 1965, it was a small City and received police patrols through the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office as part of a larger district. At that time, the population was less than a thousand residents. Crime was fairly low, and the use of the Sheriff's office on an informal basis served the needs of the City. The founding fathers wanted a low tax base, and settled on 67 cents per thousand dollars of assessed property value. At that time, the City provided few services, with most being provided by the County.

The passing of Measures 5 (1990) and 50 (1997) were aimed to prevent rapid tax hikes, and resulted in capping the amount of property taxes that go to schools and other government services (general property tax). Due to these measures, Happy Valley general property tax is capped at 67 cents, which is not enough to cover general costs of City Services. This is why the City of Happy Valley is required to pass Serial Option Levies in order to maintain a dedicated police department.

Q: Why does Happy Valley need to pass the Public Service Levy?

Happy Valley's low tax rate of just 67 cents will not provide funding for police services. This results in the need to go out for a levy to approve dedicated funding for police services every four to five years. The recent Police Levy, Measure 3-462 proposed a new tax rate of \$1.65 per thousand of assessed value to fund police services for the five year period beginning July 1, 2015. This \$1.65 rate is a \$0.27 increase per thousand over the current expiring levy and reflects an approximate \$81.00 increase per year for the average Happy Valley household.

Q: How did the City decide to levy the amount of \$1.65?

The Happy Valley Task Force and City Council conducted extensive research and discussed various options regarding police services, and the precise dollar amount that was needed in order to provide Happy Valley residents with the service that they are accustomed to. The three options were:

\$1.38- This amount would remain consistent with the historical levy rates of 2002, 2006 and 2010. However, the amount would not fund the current level of police service for the growing community resulting in decreased police services, reduction of police personnel and no contingency fund for emergency events. Over the past twelve years, cost to provide police services has gone up. Because we contract police services from the CCSO this increase directly reflects the Sheriff's increased costs which are transparent and actual.

\$1.53- This amount would maintain the current number of police officers, without offering any additional officers or services. Hiring additional officers would be contingent upon increased assessed values in the city due to building activity.

\$1.65- This amount would offer increased level of services in the following areas: Maintain a small contingency fund for emergency events, provide funding for a school resource officer to work within all Happy Valley schools, create a two-district policing model which provides for; maintaining two police officers on duty patrolling and responding to calls 24/7, formation of geo-based patrols decreasing emergency response times, provides for pro-active patrols deterring crime, sustains police coverage if one officer is on a call or unavailable, decreases the overtime budget meaning if one officer is gone we can elect not to replace them with overtime based on call activity.

Q: What is the Happy Valley Task Force?

The Task Force is a panel of Citizens that was formed in 2013 through direction of City Council. The goal of the task force was to research and review data to support the Police Services Levy. The task force reviewed the current services; studied crime statistics and assessed the future law enforcement needs of the growing community. The task force offered several opportunities for citizens to participate in the plan, including holding open houses and information sessions at City Council meetings. Additionally, communication was sent to our residents via the City's monthly newsletters, City website and social media, all explaining the work of the police task force and informing residents of the proposed increase. With feedback from the town hall meetings, and a full year of research, the Task Force compiled a comprehensive report of the findings and presented to City Council, which resulted in the levied amount of \$1.65.

Q: Who provides police services for the City?

In Happy Valley, we have unique law enforcement needs, but we also have a tight budget. For that monetary reason and many others, we partner with the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office for police services. The Sheriff has provided contract police services here since 1973, making Happy Valley the first law enforcement contract city in Clackamas County.

Through this partnership and annual contract, the City is able to maintain local control and identity for our police, and save money through the economies of scale. The City benefits financially by taking advantage of the service functions which a larger law enforcement agency can provide. This annual contract provides the dedicated police services that you see today.

Q: What does failure of the levy mean?

Failure of the levy results in no dedicated funding to pay the contract to the CCSO for dedicated police services after November, 2015. This means no dedicated police patrols, investigations of crimes, longer response times to life threatening emergencies and no police department; they will all be gone.

Q: If we lose the dedicated Happy Valley police, won't the Clackamas County Sheriff step in?

No. The Clackamas County Sheriff's Office will only respond to life threatening emergency calls and response will be based on availability. Residents can expect much longer response times, double or triple that of the current response time. The Sheriff's Office does not have the resources, staffing or funds to patrol the City of Happy Valley without the funds generated by the police levy.

****Press Release from Sheriff Roberts, December 4, 2014****

"The Clackamas County Sheriff's Office does not provide dedicated police service -- including dedicated patrol and other related services -- to incorporated cities. The result of the November 2014 vote is that Happy Valley's levy that funds our dedicated police service to Happy Valley ends in June 2015-with funding for that service running out in November 2015.

If Happy Valley ends its contract with the Sheriff's Office for dedicated police service, we will treat Happy Valley like any other incorporated city in the county: Sheriff's Office deputies will help respond to calls involving life-safety, when available.

However, in the absence of a contract for police services, the Sheriff's Office will not have the staffing or resources to provide dedicated patrol to the city." Sheriff Roberts stated.

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Q: How many officers are on duty per shift?

Currently, there is anywhere between one and two officers per shift 24/7/365.

Q: Where exactly do Happy Valley Police patrol?

The Happy Valley police are dedicated to patrolling Happy Valley proper, and do not patrol west of 205. This means that the Clackamas Town Center and 82nd Avenue are not covered by Happy Valley police, even though they share the City zip code.

Q: I see a lot of Clackamas County Sheriff vehicles in my neighborhood, why not Happy Valley cars?

There are two answers for this question.

1. Due to the location of the Clackamas County Sheriff's office (Sunnybrook and 92nd area), it is likely that you see Sheriff patrol cars driving through Happy Valley to report to unincorporated county districts.
2. Because we do contract with Clackamas County Sheriff for police services you will see a Sheriff Deputy and patrol car filling in on shifts in the City when a dedicated Happy Valley Officer is out sick or absent. This could be anywhere from a partial shift, full day or even up to a couple of weeks. In this case, the relief deputy filling the shift is still being paid by the City through the contract.

Q: What is the average response time by Happy Valley police?

Happy Valley police respond to a priority call with an average response time of 4-6 minutes. Without a dedicated police department, this time would double, or even triple, and be responded to only when the Sheriff's Office is available, and only respond to calls involving life-safety.

Q: What is defined as a priority call?

A priority call is a call that involves domestic violence and/or something that is in progress at the moment.

Q: Will the money raised from the police levy be spent in other areas of the City budget?

No, the money is allocated directly for police services, and will be spent for public safety.

Q: Who is responsible for the property taxes of newly developed neighborhoods or bank-owned homes?

New home taxes are paid by either the builder, developer or bank, depending on who technically owns the property at the time. If a home is in foreclosure, the bank is responsible for the property tax.

Q: Is property tax the same for all residents, including newly developed neighborhoods, bank-owned homes and businesses?

Yes, all Happy Valley residents pay the same 67 cents per thousand dollars of assessed property value. The same applies to the police levy.

Q: What can I do to ensure that Happy Valley does not lose our Police Department?

The best thing that you can do is continue to educate yourself by learning the facts, educate others (neighbors, friends, family members) and stay connected to the City through Facebook and the monthly newsletter. Spread the message that every vote counts, and support the Happy Valley Police Levy in the May 2015 election.

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Q: What is the biggest lesson learned from the failure of the levy and what is the City doing to ensure a successful passing in the May 2015 election?

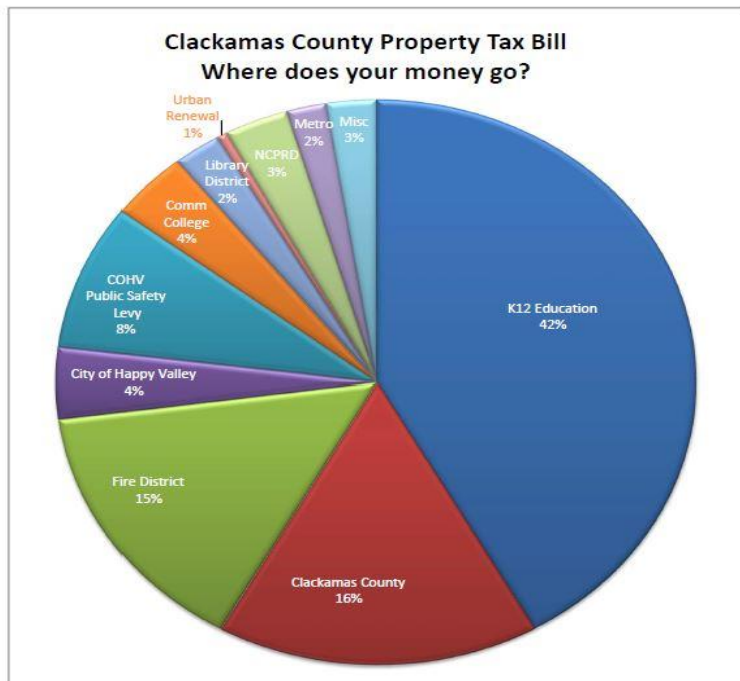
The City Council accepts responsibility for a poor communication and messaging strategy in the November 2014 election. The history of three successful levies gave the City a false sense of comfort for the passing of this levy. We understand the importance of clear and concise messaging and will do all that it takes to educate the Happy Valley residents leading up to the May 2015 election.

Q: Why aren't the police funded through the general property tax?

As mentioned above, the City tax rate is capped at 67 cents per thousand of assessed property value. This does not allocate enough funds to cover the cost of police services for Happy Valley residents. For every tax dollar that a citizen pays, the City receives just 12 cents total, with 88 cents going to education and other governmental agencies. This results in the need to raise additional funds to cover the expense of police services in the City. Please see the following chart for a breakdown of how property taxes are spent.

\$324,540 Real Market Value Home \$311,821 Assessed Value Home		
District	Dollar	%
K12 Education	\$ 2,154	41.46%
Clackamas County	842	16.21%
Fire District	762	14.66%
City of Happy Valley	209	4.03%
COHV Public Safety		
Levy	430	8.28%
Comm College	204	3.92%
Library District	124	2.38%
Urban Renewal	28	0.54%
NCPRD	166	3.20%
Metro	145	2.80%
Misc	131	2.52%
Total	\$ 5,195	100.00%

Misc includes:	
Port of Portland	
SRV Lighting	
Vector Control	
Trimet Bond	
Extension & 4H	



Q: Now that the levy has failed, what are the next steps?

The City Council and staff are taking this very seriously. We are working to formulate an intensive communication strategy plan with the goal of better understanding the needs and wants of the community members. This comprehensive plan will include: polling, research and educating the community for the May 2015 election.

Q: When will the current funds run out?

Maintaining current level of service, the police department has resources to run until November, 2015. After that date, the funds will be depleted.

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Q: How do taxes in Happy Valley compare to other Cities in the county?

Happy Valley residents continue to pay the lowest taxes in Clackamas County. In other Cities, it is typical that the general government tax is high enough to cover expenses such as police services. However, due to the Happy Valley tax rate being capped at just 67 cents, it is necessary to pass the local option levy to cover the cost of police services. The chart below breaks down the tax rates in the Cities of Clackamas County, these numbers show that even with the passing of the local option tax at \$1.65, which would bring the total tax rate to \$2.32 per thousand, our City would continue to pay the lowest taxes in the county. Happy Valley at the proposed rate of \$2.32 would be nearly half of our neighboring cities: Milwaukie residents pay \$4.07, Gladstone \$4.47, Lake Oswego \$4.77, Sandy \$3.67 and Portland \$4.13.

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>City of Happy Valley</i> Comparison on Property Taxes Tax Roll Year Ending June 30, 2014 (Payable November 2014)</p>							
Tax Code*	Happy Valley 012-149	Damascus 012-215	Milwaukie 012-002	Gladstone 115-040	Lake Oswego 007-021	Sandy 046-017	Portland 000-003
General Government							
City	0.6710	2.8000	4.0680	4.4705	4.7683	3.6747	4.1349
City Local Option	1.3800			0.9900			0.4026
City Urban Renewal				1.0289	0.6726	1.8841	1.6980
Port Fire/Police Pens							2.4097
County	2.4037	2.4037	2.4037	2.2306	2.3056	2.1464	2.4037
County Extension & 4-H	0.0499	0.0499	0.0499	0.0463	0.0479	0.0445	0.0499
Library	0.3961	0.3961	0.3961	0.3675	0.3800	0.3527	0.3961
County Public Sfty Local Opt	0.2480	0.2480	0.2480	0.2480	0.2391	0.2209	0.2480
County Soils Cons	0.0499	0.0499	0.0499	0.0463	0.0479	0.0445	0.0499
Fire District	2.3816	2.3816	2.3816			1.9394	
Park N Clackamas	0.5319	0.5319	0.5319				
Port of Portland	0.0699	0.0699	0.0699	0.0649	0.0673	0.0623	0.0636
SRV 2 Metro	0.0962	0.0962	0.0962	0.0893	0.0926		0.0874
SRV 2 Metro - Loc Opt 2013	0.0960	0.0960	0.0960	0.0960	0.0960		0.0960
Vector Control	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0061	0.0063	0.0058	0.0065
Vector Control Loc Opt	0.0250	0.0250	0.0250	0.0250	0.0241	0.0223	0.0250
Park Lk Grove					0.0417		
UR County SP							0.2642
UR County	0.0998	0.0998	0.1119	0.0073	0.0042	0.0034	0.0086
Total General Government	8.5055	9.2545	10.5346	9.7167	8.7936	10.4010	12.3441
Education							
ESD	0.3675	0.3675	0.3675	0.3410	0.3526	0.3272	0.4143
Community College	0.5557	0.5557	0.5557	0.5155	0.2720	0.4380	0.2540
School District	4.8123	4.8123	4.8123	4.4879	4.2890	4.1324	4.2773
School Local Option					1.3401		1.8039
Portland SD GAP Bond							0.4570
Total Education	5.7355	5.7355	5.7355	5.3444	6.2537	4.8976	7.2065
Excluded from Limitation							
SRV 2 Metro Bond	0.2655	0.2655	0.2655	0.2592	0.2562		0.2428
Trans TriMet Bond							
Water 3 Mt. Scott Bond							
FD 1 Clack Co Bond	0.0558	0.0558	0.0558				
Port of Portland							
Multnomah Co Bond							
City Bond			0.1859		0.4086		0.2231
Community College Bond	0.1491	0.1491	0.1491	0.1384	0.4238		0.3980
School District Bond	1.9369	1.9369	1.9369	4.4789	0.9140	2.0746	0.9842
Total Excluded from Limitation	2.4073	2.4073	2.5932	4.8765	2.0026	2.0746	1.8481
Total Rate (per thousand)	16.6483	17.3973	18.8633	19.9376	17.0499	17.3732	21.3987

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Q: Where can I learn more?

The City is dedicated to promoting factual messaging and discussions amongst the community. We invite you to join us at any of the upcoming information sessions and ask you to follow us on Facebook to stay current on information.

Upcoming Levy meetings and discussions:

Tuesday, December 9, 10am – 12pm Conversation with Mayor Lori DeRemer. New Seasons Market, Happy Valley

Thursday, December 11, 7pm. Traffic and Public Safety Meeting. Happy Valley City Hall

Tuesday, January 6, 6-7pm. City Council Work Session. Happy Valley City Hall

Thursday, January 8, 7pm. Traffic and Public Safety Meeting. Happy Valley City Hall

Tuesday, January 20, 6-7pm. City Council Work Session. Happy Valley City Hall

Additional meetings to be added...

Who can I contact with questions and concerns?

Please direct all questions to: Steve Campbell, Director of Public Safety at 503-783-3818 or Jason Tuck, City Manager at 503-783-3833.